

**REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE****Form Approved**  
**OMB No. 0704-0188**

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Washington Headquarters Service, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington, DC 20503.

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<b>1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY)</b> 21-03-2012		<b>2. REPORT TYPE</b> Master of Military Studies Research Paper		<b>3. DATES COVERED (From - To)</b> September 2011 - April 2012	
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b> U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command (MARSOC) Logistics: The "Return on Investment"				<b>5a. CONTRACT NUMBER</b> N/A	
				<b>5b. GRANT NUMBER</b> N/A	
				<b>5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER</b> N/A	
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b> Joseph E. Moye, Major, USMC				<b>5d. PROJECT NUMBER</b> N/A	
				<b>5e. TASK NUMBER</b> N/A	
				<b>5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER</b> N/A	
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> USMC Command and Staff College Marine Corps University 2076 South Street Quantico, VA 22134-5068				<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b> N/A	
<b>9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> N/A				<b>10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)</b> N/A	
				<b>11. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER</b> N/A	
<b>12. DISTRIBUTION AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> Unlimited					
<b>13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b> N/A					
<b>14. ABSTRACT</b> MARSOC inherited the limited logistics structure from the units of which it was conceived. This limited structure minimally enabled garrison operation, training and exercises, but did not contain organic deployable and expeditionary CSS capability. MARSOC's Total Force initiative, validated and approved by the Commander, USSOCOM, in May 2010, provides MARSOC organic logistics and CSS required to conduct full spectrum, distributed Special Operations in an austere environment. This represents a significant opportunity for both the Marine Corps and USSOCOM in an era that will likely be defined by resource constraints, conventional force down-sizing and withdrawal of major combat forces from Afghanistan by 2014. The initiative will provide cohesive and responsive CSS capability for deployed MARSOB beyond operations in Afghanistan. Additionally, the unique training and operational experience provided by MARSOC will advance conventional individual and collective logistics communities' Joint and Inter-agency interoperability and capability through rotational tours between conventional Marine Corps and Special Operations/Joint assignments.					
<b>15. SUBJECT TERMS</b> MARSOC, SOCOM, Logistics, Combat Service Support, Total Force, Training and Education, Career Paths					
<b>16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:</b>			<b>17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b> UU	<b>18. NUMBER OF PAGES</b> 38	<b>19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON</b> Marine Corps University / Command and Staff College
<b>a. REPORT</b> Unclass	<b>b. ABSTRACT</b> Unclass	<b>c. THIS PAGE</b> Unclass			<b>19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include area code)</b> (703) 784-3330 (Admin Office)

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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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**U.S. MARINE CORPS FORCES,  
SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND (MARSOC)  
LOGISTICS:  
THE "RETURN ON INVESTMENT"**


SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

By  
**Major Joseph E. Moya**  
**UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS**

AY 11-12


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Mentor and Oral Defense Committee Member: 

Approved: 

Date: 7 MARCH 2012

Oral Defense Committee Member: 

Approved: 

Date: 7 March 2012

## Executive Summary

**Title:** U.S. MARINE CORPS FORCES, SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND (MARSOC) LOGISTICS: THE “RETURN ON INVESTMENT”

**Author:** Major Joseph E. Moye, United States Marine Corps

**Thesis:** The structure presented in the MARSOC Total Force initiative will increase organic logistics capacity and add combat service support (CSS) capability and represents a clear “return on investment” for both the U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM).

**Discussion:** At creation, MARSOC inherited the limited logistics structure from the units of which it was conceived. This limited structure minimally enabled garrison operation, training and exercises, but did not contain organic deployable and expeditionary CSS capability. MARSOC’s Total Force initiative, validated and approved by the Commander, USSOCOM, in May 2010, provides MARSOC organic logistics and CSS required to conduct full spectrum, distributed Special Operations in an austere environment. This additional capability represents a significant opportunity for both the Marine Corps and USSOCOM in an era that will likely be defined by resource constraints, conventional force down-sizing and withdrawal of major combat forces from Afghanistan by 2014. These advantages can be summarized as follows;

### Marine Corps

- Post-OEF, real world operational opportunities: “Staying Relevant”
- Greater Access and Opportunity for special operations and joint training: “Sharing the Wealth”
- MARSOC-trained logisticians returned to conventional Marine Corps for further service: “Cross-decking Long-Ball Hitters”
- Training and Education Feedback Loop: “Expanding Horizons”

### USSOCOM

- Organic, Cohesive Unit: “Habitual and Responsive Relationship”
- Tracking ability for subsequent tours: “Returning Lettermen”
- Increased exposure and awareness of conventional forces with Special Operations: “Educating the Force”

### **Recommendations:**

- Marine Corps provide logistics and CSS structure outlined in MARSOC Total Force initiative to fully optimize advantages detailed in following paper.
- Marine Corps allow 48-month tour lengths for selected CSS MOSs and billets to maximize advantages of multiple deployments and advanced training.
- Marine Corps coordinate with MARSOC and USSOCOM to identify optimal “follow-on” or “pre-requisite” assignments in conventional Marine Corps and Joint communities.

**Conclusion:** The MARSOC Total Force initiative will provide cohesive and responsive CSS capability for deployed MARSOFF beyond operations in Afghanistan. Additionally, the unique training and operational experience provided by MARSOC will advance conventional individual and collective logistics communities’ Joint and Inter-agency interoperability and capability through rotational tours between conventional Marine Corps and Special Operations/Joint assignments.

# **DISCLAIMER**

**THE OPINIONS AND CONCLUSIONS EXPRESSED HEREIN ARE THOSE OF THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT AUTHOR AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF EITHER THE MARINE CORPS COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE OR ANY OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY. REFERENCES TO THIS STUDY SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOREGOING STATEMENT.**

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*List of Acronyms*

BOD	Board of Directors
CCRB	Course Content Review Board
CJSOTF	Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force
CLB	Combat Logistics Battalion
CLR	Combat Logistics Regiment
CMC	Commandant of the Marine Corps
CPOF	Command Post of the Future
CRS	Congressional Research Service
CS	Combat Support
CSO	Critical Skills Operator
CSS	Combat Service Support
DET 1	Marine Corps Special Operations Command Detachment One
DM	Decision Memorandum
DOTMLPF	Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel, and Facilities
DS	Direct Support
FMTU	Foreign Military Training Unit
FOSOV	Family of Special Operations Vehicles
FSRG	Force Structure Review Group
FY	Fiscal Year
GAO	U.S. Government Accountability Office
GPF	General Purpose Forces
GS	General Support
HQMC	Headquarters, Marine Corps
LST	Logistics Support Team
MAGTF	Marine Air Ground Task Force
MARFORSOC	Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command (also MARSOC)
MARSOC	Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command (also MARFORSOC)
MARSOF	Marine Special Operations Forces
MARSOTF	MARSOC SOTF
MCBUL	Marine Corps Bulletin
MCCDC	Marine Corps Combat Development Command
MCCLL	Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned
MEB	Marine Expeditionary Brigade
MEU (SOC)	Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable)
MLG	Marine Logistics Group
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty
MROC	Marine Corps Requirements Oversight Council
MSOB	Marine Special Operations Battalion
MSOC	Marine Special Operations Company
MSOLB	Marine Special Operations Logistics Battalion

*List of Acronyms (continued)*

MSOLC	Marine Special Operations Logistics Company
MSOR	Marine Special Operations Regiment
MSOSB	Marine Special Operations Support Battalion
ODB	Operational Detachment Bravo
OEF	Operation ENDURING FREEDOM
OIF	Operation IRAQI FREEDOM
PBUSE	Property Book Unit Supply Enhanced
PTP	Pre-deployment Training Phase
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review
SAMS-E	Standard Army Maintenance System - Enhanced
SERE	Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape
SOCREB	Special Operations Command Requirements Evaluation Board
SOCS	Special Operations Capabilities Specialist
SOCSS	Special Operations Combat Service Specialist
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SOML	School of MAGTF Logistics
SOO	Special Operations Officer
SOTF	Special Operations Task Force
SSAVIE	SOF Sustainment Asset Visibility Information Exchange
SSIC	Standard Subject Identification Code
STC	SOF Training Course
SUPCEN	Support Center
TCCC	Tactical Casualty Combat Care
TECOM	Training and Education Command
UDP	Unit Deployment Program
USASOC	U.S. Army Special Operations Command
USMC	United States Marine Corp
USSOCOM	U.S. Special Operations Command

## *Preface*

While serving on the component headquarters of U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, I had the unique opportunity to be assigned to the Commander's Total Force Operational Planning Team for the preponderance of my tour. Tasked with examining the Command's mission statement and operational requirements, then recommending structure, organization, equipment and employment changes to meet them, this assignment provided a rare experience for a young Field Grade Officer. I attended and participated in many General Officer and senior Civilian executive engagements that opened my eyes to the world "behind the curtain," both in the Marine Corps and Special Operations Command. It also revealed the power and responsibility of Field Grade Officers to shape and influence the future of our Nation's fighting forces. While we struggled daily to provide the most effective, realistic, and levelheaded advice to our commanders in both organizations, I believe we ultimately provided "a" right answer to the requirement levied, within the limitations applied. It is an experience that I will reflect upon to inform my actions and decisions in the future.

I extend my thanks first to MajGen Paul Lefebvre, Commander MARFORSOC, and Col Peter Warker, Deputy Commander, for their trust and confidence in a young Major, allowing me the authority, latitude and freedom to participate in an initiative of such scope and magnitude. Without that faith, I would not have had the eye-opening experience that ultimately led to the desire to write this paper. Further, I extend my deepest gratitude to Mr. Kevin Foley and Major Sean Mullen of MARSOC's Logistics Division (G-4), who provided outstanding support and "honest-broker" input as I drafted this paper. They understand the "return on investment" much better than I ever will be able to articulate.



*"You will not find it difficult to prove that battles, campaigns, and even wars have been won or lost primarily because of logistics."*

*- Gen Dwight D. Eisenhower*

*"Our numbers are few; our contributions are numerous; our results are substantial."*

*- MajGen Paul E. Lefebvre*

## **Introduction**

Marines became part of USSOCOM with the creation of MARSOC on February 24, 2006. The newly formed command was initially comprised of Marines and Sailors from the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (Antiterrorism) Headquarters, 1st and 2nd Force Reconnaissance Companies and the Foreign Military Training Unit (FMTU) (See Appendix A, Figure 2).<sup>1</sup> MARSOC inherited the limited logistics structure of those "feeder" units, which received deployed support from the Marine Expeditionary Force. As such, MARSOC was capable of minimally enabling garrison operation, training and exercises, but not capable of deploying organic expeditionary CSS.<sup>2</sup> The Marine Corps leadership envisioned, but ultimately discarded, CSS structure prior to the activation of MARSOC. They did so under the premise that support would come from conventional forces, specifically the Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), Special Operations Capable (SOC) with whom MARSOC units would deploy. However, USSOCOM chose to separate Marine Special Operations Forces (MARSOFF) from the MEU (SOC) in 2007, creating a CSS void for deployed MARSOFF that were operating under a command that did not possess or plan for that additional CSS capacity.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Fred Pushies. *MARSOC: U.S. Marine Corps Special Operations Command*. Minneapolis: Zenith Press, 2011, 48-49.

<sup>2</sup> Organic in this use is defined as "a military unit that is a permanent part of a larger unit."

<sup>3</sup> Kevin Foley and Major Joseph Moye. *Combat Service Support*. Information Paper, Camp Lejeune: AC/S G-4, 2010, 1.

Since 2006, MARSOC has evolved numerous times, most recently with the partially-supported 2011 MARSOC Total Force initiative, a phased re-organization increasing Combat Support (CS) capacity and adding CSS capability to re-balance the Command to meet present and future requirements. Specifically, the MARSOC Total Force initiative increases organic logistics capacity and adds the Marine Special Operations Logistics Battalion (MSOLB) to provide organic CSS capability. This increase in capacity and capability was designed to provide garrison logistics for exercises and training, as well as deployed logistics and CSS for forward deployed MARSOF operations.<sup>4</sup> The MARSOC Total Force initiative concept of logistics will provide USSOCOM with an enduring cohesive and responsive CSS capability for deployed MARSOF beyond operations in Afghanistan. Additionally, the unique training and operational experience provided by MARSOC will advance conventional individual and collective logistics communities' Joint and Inter-agency interoperability and capability through rotational tours between conventional Marine Corps and Special Operations/Joint assignments. ***The structure presented in the MARSOC Total Force initiative will increase organic logistics capacity and add CSS capability, and represents a clear “return on investment” for both the Marine Corps and USSOCOM.*** The following will articulate: The conditions generating the requirement for the Total Force initiative; the current leadership's solution to the requirement; the benefits to the Marine Corps and USSOCOM for creating MARSOC organic CSS capability; and recommendations for fully capitalizing and realizing those benefits.

#### **U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command Creation**

Although it was the last Service to formally join the Special Operations community, the Marine Corps has been historically present in Special Operations since the conception of

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<sup>4</sup> U.S. Special Operations Command. *MARSOC Total Force*. Brief, Tampa: AC/S J-8, Sept 21, 2010.

USSOCOM. One publication even suggests that prior to the official creation of USSOCOM in 1987, the Commandant of the Marine Corps at the time, General Paul X. Kelley, was presented with a concept that placed all Special Operations units under the command of the Marine Corps.<sup>5</sup> Gen Kelley declined, citing that doing so would “impact the Marine Corps mission around the world,” to project military power from the sea.<sup>6</sup> With that, the Marine Corps’ sole efforts in the Special Operations community from 1987-1992 were confined to Force Reconnaissance Company detachments assigned to the MEUs (SOC).<sup>7</sup>

In 1992, a USSOCOM/USMC Board was established, aimed at formalizing the joint efforts of the two organizations. The Board was terminated in 1996 and between then and autumn 2001, the USMC’s limited contribution to Special Operations remained the MEU (SOC) program. However, following the attacks of September 11, 2001, Commandant General James L. Jones and USSOCOM Commander General Charles R. Holland re-established the USSOCOM/USMC Board; ultimately resulting in the publication of Marine Corps Bulletin (MCBUL) 5400 of December 2002, calling for “proof-of-concept” for a Marine Corps contribution to USSOCOM.<sup>8</sup> Following publication of that MCBUL, a February 23 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the two organizations established the parameters for a proof-of-concept (test to last two years, beginning in 2004). The Marine Corps formed Detachment One (DET 1), officially activated June 20, 2003, at Camp Pendleton, California.

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<sup>5</sup> Pushie, 17.

<sup>6</sup> Pushie, 17-18; and Susan L. Murray, “The United States Marine Corps and Special Operations: A Nineteen Year Convergence Toward a Marine Component,” (USAWC Strategy Research Project, Army War College, 2006), 8.

<sup>7</sup> While the Marine Corps’ Maritime Special Purpose Forces (MSPF) elements and Force Reconnaissance units could have been designated and assigned special operations forces, the Marine Corps made a compelling case that those units were integral to the MAGTF concept and in severable. Murray, 8.

<sup>8</sup> Per SECNAV M-5210.2 (Department of the Navy, SSIC MANUAL), Code 5400 in correspondence is used to address General Organizations, Functions and Statuses. MCBUL 5400 are used when standing up or changing organizations within the Marine Corps; addressing chain of command, personnel and equipment, relationships, locations, missions and concepts of support (not all inclusive).

DET 1 served under the operational control of USSOCOM while detached from the Marine Corps (See Appendix A, Figure 1). The Commandant stated that he would address the permanent establishment of a Marine Force within USSOCOM after reviewing “the results of the test and a detailed analysis of all related DOTMLPF issues.”<sup>9</sup> Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld approved the addition of Marine Corps Special Operations Forces to USSOCOM after successful combat operations by DET 1 during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM in 2004. On March 10, 2006, DET 1 was officially deactivated and replaced by MARSOC.<sup>10</sup>

### **U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command Evolution**

Shortly after activation, Marine Corps and USSOCOM leadership recognized that MARSOC’s initial organization did not adequately match its assigned mission. This was specifically addressed in a 2007 U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report on integration of Marine Corps Forces into USSOCOM. This report states that the Marine Corps “did not use critical practices of strategic planning, such as the alignment of activities and resources, and the involvement of stakeholders in decision-making processes...as such, the Command has identified several force structure challenges that will likely affect the Command’s ability to perform its full range of responsibilities, and is working to revise its force structure.”<sup>11</sup> Specifically concerning logistics and CSS, the report identified “shortfalls in the number of personnel available to conduct support functions” as a result of failing to “conduct a comprehensive, data-driven analysis to determine the number of personnel needed to meet the

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<sup>9</sup> Murray, 16.

<sup>10</sup> Pushie, 43-48.

<sup>11</sup> GAO Report “Special Operations Forces: Management Actions are needed to effectively integrate Marine Corps Forces into the U.S. Special Operations Command.” September 2007, summary page.

Command's mission requirements.”<sup>12</sup> Subsequent reports from Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC) and USSOCOM Headquarters 2009 studies reinforced the need for MARSOC re-organization, specifically logistics and CSS.<sup>13</sup>

Logistics and CSS concerns were key elements driving multiple attempts to re-organize MARSOC within its authorized end-strength to meet USSOCOM requirements. The first re-organization in 2008 followed Marine Corps Requirements Oversight Council (MROC) approval to address company-level organic logistics enabler shortfalls through a re-designation of 118 Infantry MOS structure to logistics MOS structure, with re-organization phased from 2009 to 2014.<sup>14</sup> While this minimally addressed organic logistics concerns at the company level, it failed to “address the CJSOTF expectation that MSOCs would possess a ‘fair-share’ of CSS capability required to self-support operations in their area of operations.”<sup>15</sup> And it specifically did not address CSS capability at the battalion/SOTF level.

On 28 January 2009, the MROC met again to discuss MARSOC's internal reorganization and continued challenges. Leadership was briefed once more on the struggles with lack of CSS for deployed MARSOF. The MCCDC study, mentioned previously, was cited as sustaining argument for increasing CSS capability. However, the MROC determined that, “CSS sustainment be considered in the context of support to deployed Marine Forces in general proximity, also requiring sustainment support. The Service would not want to stand up one organization to support deployed MARSOF and another like-organization to support other

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<sup>12</sup> GAO, 5.

<sup>13</sup> Matthew Aylward: *Analysis of Combat Service Support (CSS) Requirements for Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC): Findings and Recommendations*. Study, Quantico: MCCDC, 2009; and James Prior: *SOF Logistics Support Structure Study Out-Brief*. Brief, Tampa: SOAL-J4, 2009.

<sup>14</sup> These 118 billets were non-SOF security element billets that were inherited from original structure. Foley, 1.

<sup>15</sup> Foley, 1.

deployed Marine Forces.”<sup>16</sup> In March 2009 MROC leadership described the relationship as “separate, but not separable,” as, at the time, they could not envision MARSOF and conventional Marine Forces deploying to separate theaters. In effect, it meant that MARSOF support would remain solely “dependent upon the coincidence of geographic location irrespective of Title 10 responsibility.”<sup>17</sup>

On 8 July 2009, MARSOC presented 2015 Phase I (See Appendix A, Figure 3), another attempt to re-organize within authorized end-strength to address capacity and capability shortfalls. This re-organization made significant changes to Component and operational command structures designed to improve chain of command issues and unit employment concepts. While this re-organization made many improvements in the Command, it did little for the logistics community and in fact worsened the “Tooth to Tail” ratio – having “deleterious affect on both deployed and garrison logistics support capability,” by creating additional logistics requirements.<sup>18</sup>

A third attempt at MARSOC re-organization came in the fall of 2009 with a 2015 Phase II proposal. In this proposal, MARSOC sought to increase its manpower end-strength by 1,043 Marines, providing additional Critical Skills Operator (CSO) and Combat Support (CS) capacity. The intent of this proposal was to “right-size” the force with respect to its CSO and CS capabilities; create like-size battalions capable of establishing a deployable SOTF headquarters; and increase logistics within operational headquarters. While well intentioned, this proposal did not fully address the previously argued CSS capability shortfalls required to support deployed

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<sup>16</sup> General James Amos. *MROC Decision Memorandum 14-2009*. Decision Memorandum, Quantico: HQMC, 2009, 4.

<sup>17</sup> Title 10 of United States Code provides the legal basis for the roles, missions and organization of each of the services responsibility references Service obligation to USSOCOM Components. Foley, 1.

<sup>18</sup> Phase I Re-Org inactivated 4<sup>th</sup> MSOB, activated the Regimental Headquarters, re-organized 3<sup>rd</sup> MSOB as best it could with existing structure into a deployable HQ (still not equal to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> MSOBs), and made Intel Co a full Bn. Foley, 1.

Marine Special Operations Companies (MSOC) and Special Operations Task Forces (SOTF). Limited logistics personnel were included in the proposal, but not at the capacity determined by previous studies, or in the employment model conceived in previous study war-games. It addressed organic logistics requirements in the line battalions for “bare essentials” needed to deploy a Marine SOTF headquarters, relying heavily on the CJSOTF again to provide the preponderance of CSS.<sup>19</sup>

### **U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command - Total Force Concept**

In April 2010, MARSOC introduced a Total Force initiative (See Appendix A, Figure 4) to the Commander, USSOCOM. Per the MARSOC Commander, “A ‘re-balanced’ MARSOC can provide USSOCOM with a force capable of connecting population, government and security forces of friendly countries in order to support our Nation’s national interest in a post Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) environment.”<sup>20</sup> The “re-balancing” that MGen Lefebvre, MARSOC Commander, was referring to was the continually increasing imbalance in “Tooth to Tail” between CSOs and support personnel (CS, CSS, and headquarters personnel depth required to manage the force) caused by MARSOC’s activation within the structure restraints of the pre-existing commands from which it derived. With the “War on Terror” enduring, coupled with ever-increasing demands in Afghanistan, the requirement for CS and CSS personnel has grown. These demands are currently being addressed through “Request For Forces” processes, where individuals are drawn from other Special Operations Components, or Marine Corps forces, to

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<sup>19</sup> Extracted from the brief presented to the SOCREB. U.S. Marine Forces, Special Operations Command, *MARSOC Total Force*. Brief, Camp Lejeune: Office of the Commander, April 15, 2010

<sup>20</sup> This quote comes from MGen Lefebvre’s cover letter to the MARSOC Total Force Initiative SOCREB submission.

provide these capabilities to deploying MARSOF.<sup>21</sup> The Total Force initiative represented “the minimum Force determined as sufficient to address current, enduring operational requirements with consideration for limited emerging requirements that the Commander, USSOCOM should direct.”<sup>22</sup> In other words, the MARSOC Total Force initiative seeks to address those demands organically, where they are essential, realistic and reasonable to both USSOCOM and the Marine Corps.

The Deputy Commander, USSOCOM, reviewed and validated the structure requirements presented in the MARSOC Total Force initiative at the Special Operations Command Requirements Evaluation Board (SOCREB) in May 2010. The USSOCOM Board of Directors (BOD) approved the initiative in total in June 2010. Following that approval, USSOCOM presented the validated requirement to the Marine Corps. This effort included with Marine Corps key leadership and formal engagement with the Commandant of the Marine Corps Force Structure Review Group (FSRG), which was in session at the time, determining the future structure of the Marine Corps at large. While conceptually supported officially by General Amos, the current Commandant, the final outcome of the initiative has not yet been decided. However, in his letter to Admiral Olson on 1 March 2011, the Commandant stated that he approved an increase in MARSOC’s operational structure, which included the CSS structure necessary to create the MSOLB.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Due to manpower/capability shortages within the command, MARSOC has required external sourcing of personnel to establish and deploy SOTFs to meet USSOCOM Directive 10-1 tasks. Detailed type and quantity requirement for conventional support to current MARSOTF is in classified message DTG 161944 SEP 11, which lays out billets, report dates and deployment timelines.

<sup>22</sup> Tetterton, LtCol Geoffrey. *MARSOC Total Force - Key Themes*. Camp Lejeune: MARSOC G-8, 2010.

<sup>23</sup> Personal Letter From GEN James Amos to ADM Eric Olson dtd March 1, 2011



## **Marine Special Operations Logistics - Total Force Concept**

### **Structure and Concept of Deployment**

The Total Force Concept for Marine Special Operations Logistics was designed to provide “task-organized, scalable and responsive CSS for MARSOF with world-wide deployability; while maintaining sufficient staff and organic logistics to support garrison operations, training and exercises.” Further, the concept provides organic capability to support: “Current MARSOF theater sustainment requirements; and future, post-OEF responsiveness for distributed operations in immature theaters with austere geographic locations that lack, or do not require, a GPF presence and associated footprint.”<sup>24</sup> This capability will reside in MSOLB Direct Support (DS) and General Support (GS) units at Camp Lejeune, NC, and the Marine Special Operations Support Battalion (MSOSB) at Camp Pendleton, CA, as depicted in Figure 4 of Appendix A.

MARSOC Total Force initiative CSS capability is structured to provide task-organized, scalable and responsive, expeditionary direct support CSS for deployed MARSOC SOTFs and subordinate companies. The cornerstone of deployed CSS capability is the Marine Special Operations Logistics Company (MSOLC), consisting of 89 Marines (and two Corpsmen) trained and certified to plan, direct, coordinate and execute distributed logistics operations in diverse (mature/immature and austere) operational environments. Resident in each MSOLC are three Logistics Support Team (LST), which provide CSS for task-organized, company-level MARSOF (e.g. one MSOC, or Operation Detachment Bravo, or Navy SEAL Troop). Each LST consists of ten Marines trained and equipped as a forward logistics element to provide on-site support and a direct conduit to SOTF higher headquarters logistics structures (e.g. MSOLC operations center,

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<sup>24</sup> Notes from presentation to representatives from the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict. Joseph Moye. *Total Force Combat Service Support*. Brief, Camp Lejeune: MARFORSOC, 2010

maintenance support) in distributed environments.<sup>25</sup> The MSOLC is intended to provide the following capabilities to MARSOF: Logistics Planning and Execution; Maintenance Management; Field Level Maintenance; Fuel Support Management; Messing; General and Combat Engineering; Power Generation; Contracting; Supply Requisition and Management and Distribution (all classes); Transportation Support Planning and Execution; Theater Logistics Liaison; Airfield and Port Operations Liaison; External Lift; LZ Control; Logistics Foreign Internal Defense Training; and limited Cultural Support Team support.

The MSOLB is structured with DS MSOLCs, maintaining habitual relationships with their assigned Marine Special Operations Battalion (MSOB), a GS Engineer Company and a GS Headquarters Company (including Maintenance and Supply). When not assigned to a SOTF, these units conduct individual training to prepare for task-organization, collective pre-deployment training, pre-deployment exercises and eventual deployment. Upon receipt of a deployment order, the MSOLB conducts mission analysis and task organizes the deploying MSOLC, or LST, appropriately. The basic framework for a deploying MSOLC is depicted in Figure 5 of Appendix A, based on the structures suggested by the MCCDC and USSOCOM CSS studies conducted in 2009, as well as lessons learned from operations in Afghanistan.<sup>26</sup> Upon assignment to the SOTF, the MSOLC Company Commander is the senior logistician and assumes responsibility as the SOTF Support Center (SUPCEN) Director, directing the actions of both the parent MSOB's organic logistics section (S-4) and the MSOLC's operational CSS sections.

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<sup>25</sup> Geoffrey Tetterton. *MARSOC Unit Descriptions. Camp Lejeune: MARSOC G-8, 2010.*

<sup>26</sup> These studies wargamed the CSS requirements at the company and SOTF levels using multiple scenarios, or vignettes, to include: No external support (austere environment); partial external support (Host Nation, weak Theater Support Network); and robust external support (developed theater). (Prior 2009) (Aylward 2009)

### **Marine Special Operations Logistics - Training and Exercises**

Though CSS personnel do not specifically require “SOF Peculiar” qualifications to perform their duties, they do require enhanced training and education above and beyond basic MOS entry-level training and education. Therefore, training and education must be essentially SOF-enabling and, as such, separate and distinct from counterparts in conventional Marine Corps (this training will be commensurate in quality, but diverse in nature).

All Marines deploying with SOF require certain unique training and education in order to be employed in support of Special Operations. Currently there are two training courses that all deploying MARSOC CS and CSS Marines must complete before deployment; MARSOC’s SOF Training Course (STC), and the Full Spectrum Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) Course.<sup>27</sup> The MARSOF Logistics Operations Course (MLOC), currently in development, is intended for both MSOC and MSOLC leadership. Additionally, all Marines are directed to participate in some level of language and cultural awareness training for the region to which they are expected to deploy. The combination of tactical combat and survival skills, focused language and Special Operations training and education results in individual Marines with enhanced skill, ability and confidence to operate independently in support of Special Operations in an austere environment. This part of the individual training phase is critical to the success of a deploying unit, as CSS Marines will spend a preponderance of their deployment away from the main Forward Operating Base supporting MARSOF at distributed and austere locations, many times amongst the population.

In addition to the above requirement for all Marines, irrespective of specialty or billet, Marines will have individual training and education they must complete in order to be successful

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<sup>27</sup> The STC is a 30 day course that provides Marines skills in crew-served weapons, Service and SOF communication assets, driving, land navigation, the Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC) Course and SOF familiarization classes.

in their respective billet. While not all of these requirements are necessarily SOF peculiar or unique to MARSOC, the combination of multiple additional requirements on top of the three pre-deployment training events mentioned previously make them MARSOC peculiar. Examples of these MARSOC peculiar requirements are listed for five occupational specialty categories below;

- Motor Transport Operators: Family of Special Operations Vehicles (FOSOV) Operators Course; HEMMIT Wrecker Course; ATV Operator Course, Back Country and Defensive Driving Courses
- Motor Transport Maintenance (Maint): AM General Maint Course; Auto Intermediate Maint Course ATV Mechanics Course; FOSOV Maint Course; Fuel and Electronic Component Repair Course; Standard Army Maint System – Enhanced (SAMS-E)
- Small Arms Repairer: Joint Armor Course
- Supply and Logistics: Property Book Unit Supply Enhanced (PBUSE) training

As Marines accomplish their individual training and education requirements, the MSOLC will also be conducting and preparing for collective training prior to deployment. These collective training events are meant to demonstrate that the unit can apply individual skill sets to accomplish a given task or function. Many of these will be conducted during pre-deployment exercises, but not exclusively. There are a number of pre-deployment exercises that the MSOLC will participate in with its supported SOTF during the pre-deployment training phase (PTP). Examples of these training events include: U.S. Army, Special Operations Command (USASOC) Academics week; Command Post of the Future (CPOF) training; Command Operations Center exercise; Digital Battle Lab exercise; and the culminating mission rehearsal exercise (titled “RAVEN”). Preferably, this collective training is conducted after Marines have completed their individual training and education requirements.

### **Marine Special Operations Logistics - Tour Lengths and Career Progression**

The current tour length for MARSOC logisticians is the standard three years (36 months). Using the three-cycle deployment model, an individual Marine on three year orders can expect to complete individual and collective training and deploy at least once in support of MARSOF.<sup>28</sup> Following that deployment, the Marine will either go back into the pre-deployment pipeline for a subsequent deployment (time permissible), or be assigned a position to support garrison operations or maintain unit cohesion during the transition phase of training replacements for the next deployment. In contrast, MARSOC CSOs and CS Marines (SOCS) are assigned to MARSOC units for four to five years (Special Operations Officers, SOOs, serve four year tours). The extended tour length allows for advanced individual and collective training, multiple deployments and sufficient dwell ratio. MARSOC logisticians would benefit from a similar tour extension.

The desire of MARSOC leadership, as per the Total Force initiative proposal, is that a percentage of CSS Marines assigned, trained and deployed with MARSOF return to MARSOC after their initial assignment. Having Marines with previous MARSOC tours return for subsequent assignment later in their careers results in the following efficiencies: Less individual training and education requirements on that subsequent assignment; learning curve reduction; and development of a knowledge/experience base to build on for greater potential. This also provides the CSO with a “familiar face” to build a habitual and trusting relationship. While not every senior MARSOC logistic position requires a “Returning Lettermen” to be successful, there are a number of billets that would be advantageous to have a logistician with previous MARSOC or USSOCOM experience.

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<sup>28</sup> Three-cycle model is three equal phases of a deployment; ITP, CTP and deployment. For a seven month deployment, a Marine would require 21 months at the unit to complete the cycle if he required all individual training.

## **External Factors**

### **Down-sizing the Marine Corps - The Effects**

On 5 January 2011, the Obama administration announced that the U.S. military will be reduced, citing the Army and Marine Corps in their preview of intent to reshape the Armed Forces post-Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>29</sup> Current projections by Marine Corps planners on the Commandant's FSRG have the Marine Corps reducing from 202K to below 182K in personnel, which FSRG leadership briefed to students during this fiscal year's Command and Staff. What this means to the Marine Corps logistics community is a reduction in units and budgets. A reduction in the force means that the promotion pyramid becomes steeper. A reduction in the force also means more than reduction in personnel; it means a budget reduction for equipment and training.

While it appears that the Marine Logistics Group (MLG) was left relatively unscathed structurally, the reduction in combat arms units (e.g. infantry battalions, regiments, artillery, etc.) means an elimination of organic logistics personnel within those units. Although subtle, the change may have a noticeable impact upon and reduction to the logistics community. This, and a constrained budget, affect logisticians and intimately relate to the next external factor cited below, namely, the draw-down of forces in Afghanistan.

### **Operation Enduring Freedom Draw Down - The Effects**

Linked with the impacts of the decision to down-size the armed forces following the conclusion of major combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan is the actual planned withdrawal of U.S. Forces from Afghanistan by 2014. As the conventional Marine Corps withdraws from

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<sup>29</sup> Craig Whitlock. "Obama announces new, leaner military approach." *Washington Post*, January 5, 2012, 1.

Afghanistan and reduces in size, it intends to return its focus to pre-war operations, specifically to its amphibious roots. Operational deployment opportunities for conventional Marine Forces, specifically within the logistics community, will be significantly reduced, likely to MEU deployments and the Unit Deployment Program (UDP), which were the norm prior to 9/11.<sup>30</sup>

There are a finite number of MEU units, and UDP provides logisticians comparatively few real-world operational opportunities. Even with regular rotations of units, it is a steep decline. Currently, MLG and Combat Logistics Regiments (CLR) staffs rotate into Afghanistan. Post-OEF, the largest CSS unit to deploy will likely be a MEU CLB. While it is plausible for limited CLR deployments in support of Marine Expeditionary Brigades (MEBs), those would be infrequent and non-rotational. This reduction in opportunity to deploy and gain similar experiences to those gained in Iraq and Afghanistan could result in a significant and noticeable decline in the knowledge base of the logistics community. Fewer logisticians will have experience conducting real world operations at the Company Grade level, and even fewer at the Field Grade level.

### **Special Operations - Future Requirements**

In contrast to the reduction of a conventional footprint in Afghanistan and the reduction of conventional forces in general, there will likely be an increase of requirements for SOF, in Afghanistan and throughout the world. SOF will continue their role as the main effort in the global war on terror and deploy to countries where it is not advantageous or even desirable to have conventional forces present. At his confirmation hearing on 28 June 2011, Admiral

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<sup>30</sup>The Marine Corps established UDP to provide for the deployment of units to the Western Pacific for periods of approximately six months to maintain required presence, but reduce the number of unaccompanied tours and improve unit continuity. Initial program was a six-phased evolution that sequenced units through UDP, thus eliminating the 12-month permanent change of station assignments for personnel assigned to these units.

McRaven, USSOCOM Commander, stated that “the current and future demand for SOF capabilities and foundational activities will exceed force deployment capabilities. USSOCOM infrastructure and readiness accounts have not kept pace with SOF growth or demand.”<sup>31</sup> This statement is corroborated by recent reports that the current administration is considering an elevation in SOF’s role in Afghanistan beginning this year, with the creation of a two-star command to oversee all Special Operations and possibly a shift in overall command from conventional to Special Operations leadership.<sup>32</sup> If accurate, the demand for SOF will not decrease, rather it is likely to increase significantly. This increase further exacerbates the CSS capability issue for deployed MARSOF, as they will need to be more autonomous and self-sufficient in the absence of a mature theater support network provided by conventional forces.

Additionally, unlike its conventional force counterparts that face reductions in structure and funding, USSOCOM continues to realize significant growth. According to a July 2011 Congressional Research Service (CRS) report, USSOCOM’s FY 2012 budget request showed a seven percent increase. The House and Senate Armed Services Committees not only recommended fully funding the budget request, but added additional funds for other programs for USSOCOM. Relative to structure, the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) directed “increases in SOF force structure, particularly in terms of increasing enabling units and rotary and fixed-wing SOF aviation assets and units.”<sup>33</sup> This report is significant, as it provided further validation of the structure requirement presented in the MARSOC Total Force initiative.

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<sup>31</sup> CRS Report “U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF): Background and Issues for Congress”, 8.

<sup>32</sup> Greg Jaffe. “U.S. to elevate Special Operations forces’ role in Afghanistan.” Washington Post, February 5, 2012; Thom Shanker and Eric Schmitt. “U.S. Plans Shift to Elite Units as it Winds Down in Afghanistan.” New York Times, February 4, 2012.

<sup>33</sup> CRS, summary page.



## **The “Return on Investment”**

### **For the Marine Corps**

The first and most immediate “return on investment” for the Marine Corps relates to Armed Forces down-sizing and OEF draw-down. With the reduction in deployment opportunities in the conventional Marine Corps, MARSOC will become a desired assignment for unique and challenging deployment opportunities. While it will not eliminate the drastic reduction caused by closing down operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, it will still provide another source of operational experience for the logistics community, further aiding the knowledge base and relevance of the Marines in them.

The second return to the Marine Corps is partnership in training and education. As previously outlined above, MARSOC logisticians will have more training and education requirements than the preponderance of their counterparts in the conventional Marine Corps. As MARSOC matures its concepts on employment, it will also mature and solidify its training and exercise programs. This will result in codified individual and collective training standards, with associated funded training venues. As these venues become standardized and formalized in a training program, it is possible that opportunities will present for MARSOC to offer training to conventional force logisticians (combined and joint training events, partnering, hosted events, etc.) as this practice is already common between MARSOC and MEF G-3 training staffs. At present, MARSOC offers conventional Marines empty MARSOC seats in the MARSOC-operated Full Spectrum SERE and language programs, as well as combined training in parachuting, diving and shooting ranges.<sup>34</sup> This practice would extend throughout the logistics

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<sup>34</sup> During FY11, the following training was provided to Marines external to MARSOC: Advanced Language Training, 16 students, 52 weeks long; FS SERE, 28 students, 3 weeks long; and MARSOC Advanced Breacher Course, 2 students, 3 weeks long. This does not capture unit level shared training between operational units within and outside of MARSOC.

community via training opportunities in respective MOSs. Due to the requirement for MARSOC logisticians to attend Joint and other service schools that conventional Marine Forces does not have allocations, funding or access to, MARSOC can bridge the gap and create that access to expand the knowledge and experience base within the Marine Corps.

In addition to shared training opportunities between MARSOC and conventional Marine Corps units, there is the matter of retention and rotation for logisticians assigned to MARSOC. Under the current system, a Marine assigned to MARSOC will receive assignment orders to a new unit after three years, either within the Fleet Marine Force or Supporting Establishment. These Marines will be returning to the conventional Marine Corps with advanced training and special operations/Joint experience. As previously mentioned, only a percentage of first assignment Marines are ideal for subsequent tours at MARSOC. For example, there are 24 Company Grade (Lt/Capt) Logistics Officer billets within the MARSOC Total Force initiative structure, but only 14 Majors.<sup>35</sup> Even if all of the Major billets were filled by Marines who served previously with MARSOC as company grade officers, nearly half would still return to the conventional Marine Corps for the remainder of their careers, or go on to serve in Joint units, bringing their training, knowledge and experience with them. Upon their return to the Fleet, Marines with the additional training and experience gained with MARSOC can become instant force multipliers for their receiving unit due to language training, SERE qualifications, Joint/other service training, etc., which can expand the knowledge and experience base from a Joint environment to conventional units. A notional example for an enlisted Marine is also provided below;

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<sup>35</sup> MARSOC Total Force manning document included with SOCREB submission April 2010.

A Combat Engineer (MOS 1371), graduates boot camp, Marine Combat Training School, and Combat Engineer School. He is assigned to 8th Engineer Support Battalion and deploys with 24th MEU. Now a Corporal, he is assigned orders to report to MARSOC. At MARSOC, he conducts ITP and CTP, and deploys with an MSOLC in support of SOTF-81. After serving as a mentor for the next deploying MSOLC, now a Sergeant, he receives orders to a conventional Marine Corps billet for three years, getting promoted to Staff Sergeant. Following that assignment, he either returns to MARSOC to serve as one of the three Combat Engineer Chiefs, serves in a Joint billet, or continues to serve in conventional Marine Corps billets.

Finally, MARSOC logisticians will have a unique view on training and education based on their missions and operational experiences, potentially different from those of their conventional counterparts. Marines returning from special operations deployments will be able to contribute to the refinement and advancement of logistics training and education that would benefit individual or collective MOSs throughout the Marine Corps at the basic, intermediate and advanced stages of training and education. Examples are as follows: Shared after action reports and command chronologies; submissions to the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL); and participation in Training and Education Command (TECOM) and School of MAGTF (SOML) Course Content Review Boards (CCRBs).<sup>36</sup> Linked to the second return on investment for the Marine Corps, cited above, MARSOC logisticians due re-assignment at the conclusion of their MARSOC tour would be strong candidates for instructors or evaluators at Marine Corps training and education commands and units.

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<sup>36</sup> Experiences gained by MARSOC logisticians while supporting special operations, when socialized via CCRBs or OAGs, may identify a training or education requirement for entry level Marines, or at the intermediate/advanced level (i.e. NCO, SNCO, field grade, etc).

### *For U.S. Special Operations Command*

USSOCOM also reaps the benefits of a permanent logistics and CSS unit that mans, equips and trains a cohesive unit with habitual relationships with their CSO counterparts. In establishing the MSOLB, the Marine Corps provides an organic, reliable and responsive CSS capability for USSOCOM to deploy without the need for layers of coordination. This capability is captured appropriately in USSOCOM's own SOF Truths.<sup>37</sup> They are as follows:

1. Humans are more important than Hardware.
2. Quality is better than Quantity.
3. Special Operations Forces cannot be mass produced.
4. Competent Special Operations Forces cannot be created after emergencies occur.
5. Most Special Operations require non-SOF support.

While originally and most popularly used to describe "Special Operators" who have been screened, assessed, selected and specially trained to conduct Special Operations, the SOF Truths are just as applicable to those personnel assigned, trained and deployed to support special operations, such as MARSOC logisticians. This resonates in the MARSOC Total Force initiative concept of logistics and CSS, focusing on the quality training of Marines (humans) in small, scalable units, ready to deploy with SOF at a moment's notice. Not creating "SOF Logisticians," but creating a quality Non-SOF capability in concert with SOF capability organically.

Further, by establishing standard training and education requirements in administratively coded venues for logisticians, USSOCOM (through MARSOC leadership) has the ability to track Marines after initial assignment to MARSOC and recruit "Returning Letterman" for subsequent

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<sup>37</sup> SOF Truths were created by John Collins, writing a report on Special Operations for the House Armed Services Committee subcommittee in 1987. USSOCOM adopted the first four in 1991. Adm Olson, USSOCOM Commander, re-instated the 5th truth in 2009, stating "It's being included now so that we all understand the importance of force enablers and the contributions they make to mission success." Sean D. Naylor. "Adm Olsen adds "lost" 5th SOF Truth to doctrine." *ArmyTimes.com*, August 16, 2009, 1-3.

tours at MARSOC, USSOCOM Headquarters, Theater Special Operations Commands, or other USSOCOM-assigned units.<sup>38</sup> Retaining these already trained Marines for subsequent tours will greatly reduce the individual training requirements that are mandated for certain special operations deployments, increasing readiness and employability for both individuals and units. Additionally, previous exposure and deployed experience in the Special Operations community and environment may reduce the “steep learning curve” and transition time upon assignment. Marines may require some refresher training or education, but not nearly the amount a first assignment Marine would need before being prepared for productive participation in operations. This does advocate “SOF for Life” for CSS Marines. While a number of logisticians may flourish and thrive in the Special Operations community and remain there (alternating tours between MARSOC, USSOCOM headquarters, Theater Special Operations Commands, other Service Components, etc), those will be the exceptional few. Some will leave and return for subsequent tours, which is desired, but most will serve honorably and return to the conventional Marine Corps.

The final return for USSOCOM is the pool of Marines who served with MARSOC and returned to the conventional side of the Marine Corps, whether temporarily or permanently. As mentioned, these Marines are returning with education, training, experience, and perhaps most importantly, awareness of Special Operations. This awareness and familiarity with special operations units and employment methods provide USSOCOM with an additional link, or “advocate” in conventional forces that could potentially ease the way to successful cooperation

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<sup>38</sup> While FS SERE is not unique to personnel assigned MARSOC, STC is unique to MARSOC. MARSOC administrators can perform a 3270 data entry search for personnel with desired MOSs that have these qualifications and provide lists to MARSOC recruiters and SOFLOG Career Managers for future assignments.

in Joint operations and/or exercises between SOF and conventional forces not involving MARSOF.

## **Recommendations**

The Marine Corps should fully implement the proposed logistics structure in the MARSOC Total Force initiative. Fully structured and manned, MARSOC represents a great opportunity for the logistics community to make significant contributions after OEF. By being proactively involved in the establishment and maturation of MSOLB training and operations, HQMC will be positioned to influence and create opportunities for both conventional and Special Operations logistics communities. They will be able to capitalize on the previously mentioned training and education venues and feedback loops in order to improve their own training standards and schoolhouse periods of instruction.

The Marine Corps should allow 48-month (four year) tour lengths for select CSS MOSs and billets to maximize advantages of multiple deployments and advanced training. MARSOC has been directed to provide enduring SOTF and MSOC presences world-wide, post OEF. The MSOLB will require the same continuity and depth in order to support this requirement, likely in austere environments where the theater support network may not be as robust or capable as it once was in Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>39</sup> Total Force initiative structure implementation will not wholly solve the deficiencies in deployed and garrison support within the guidance and directives for deployment training, theater entry requirements, performance and resilience and dwell ratio. Based on proposed individual and collective training phases in the pre-deployment process, a four year tour would allow for pre-deployment training, two seven month deployments

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<sup>39</sup> U.S. Special Operations Command. *MARSOC Total Force*. Brief, Tampa: AC/S J-8, 2010.

(or multiple shorter deployments), experience transference, advanced training and upward mobility, and still allow the opportunity for a Marine to experience other career advancement billets in the conventional Marine Corps in each rank. Obtaining this tour length, MARSOC would achieve their goals of professionalizing logistics within the Command and safeguarding service resource longevity.<sup>40</sup>

The Marine Corps should coordinate with MARSOC and USSOCOM to identify optimal “follow-on” or “pre-requisite” assignments in both conventional Marine Corps and Joint communities (e.g., Post-MSOLC CO goes to a training command, or Joint G-4; Post-MSOB S-4 promotable goes to be CLB OpsO; Post MSOLB OpsO goes to be Logistics School Instructor, etc). By identifying billets in the Marine Corps, USSOCOM and other Joint commands, leadership will be better able to place Marines in billets that meet their desired career path and optimize the training and experience they have gained. This can also aid Marine Corps assignment monitors in managing these billets and assisting Marines in their careers.

## **Closing Remarks**

MARSOC was formed without the organic deployable and expeditionary CSS capability it needed to support Special Operations rapid response and short-term self-sustainment. The MARSOC Total Force initiative balances the force and provides this capability. In a post Iraq and Afghanistan environment, with downsizing of our military, the Marine Corps will find itself

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<sup>40</sup> Per Draft Decision Paper written by Maj Sean Mullen, AC/S G-4 to request extended tour lengths for select Combat Logistics personnel within MARSOC. The paper cited that the current 3-year tour only provided for limited ITP, one seven month deployment, inadequate post-deployment turnover, and no advance

d professional development.

with fewer opportunities in advanced training and real-world operational experience, specifically in the logistics communities. Pre-9/11, Marines sought assignment to MEUs and UDP. The Marine Corps is returning to a period where certain units are highly sought; with the implementation of the Total Force initiative, MARSOC will be one of them. The common thread in all four returns on investment for the Marine Corps is the advancement of Marines in the various logistics communities. MARSOC provides a unique venue, with Marine Corps and USSOCOM resources, to advance the training and education of Marine logisticians beyond the capabilities of the conventional Marine Corps. The MSOLB, and MSOB organic staffs, can provide opportunities for highly trained and seasoned logisticians to gain knowledge and experience, which they can then share with their peers and communities throughout the greater Marine Corps.



## Appendix A

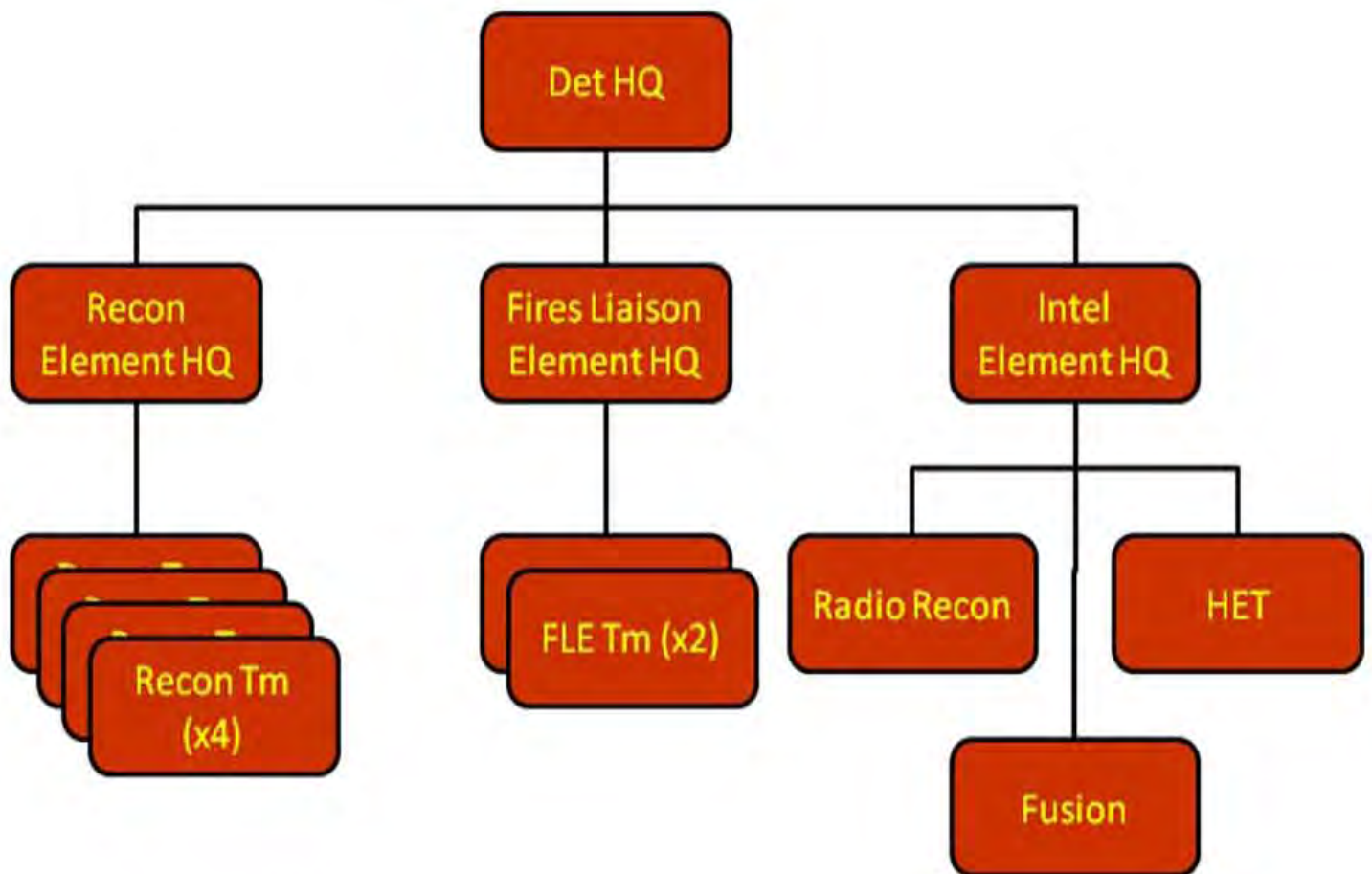


Figure 1: Marine Corps Detachment One Task Organization in Iraq

## Appendix A

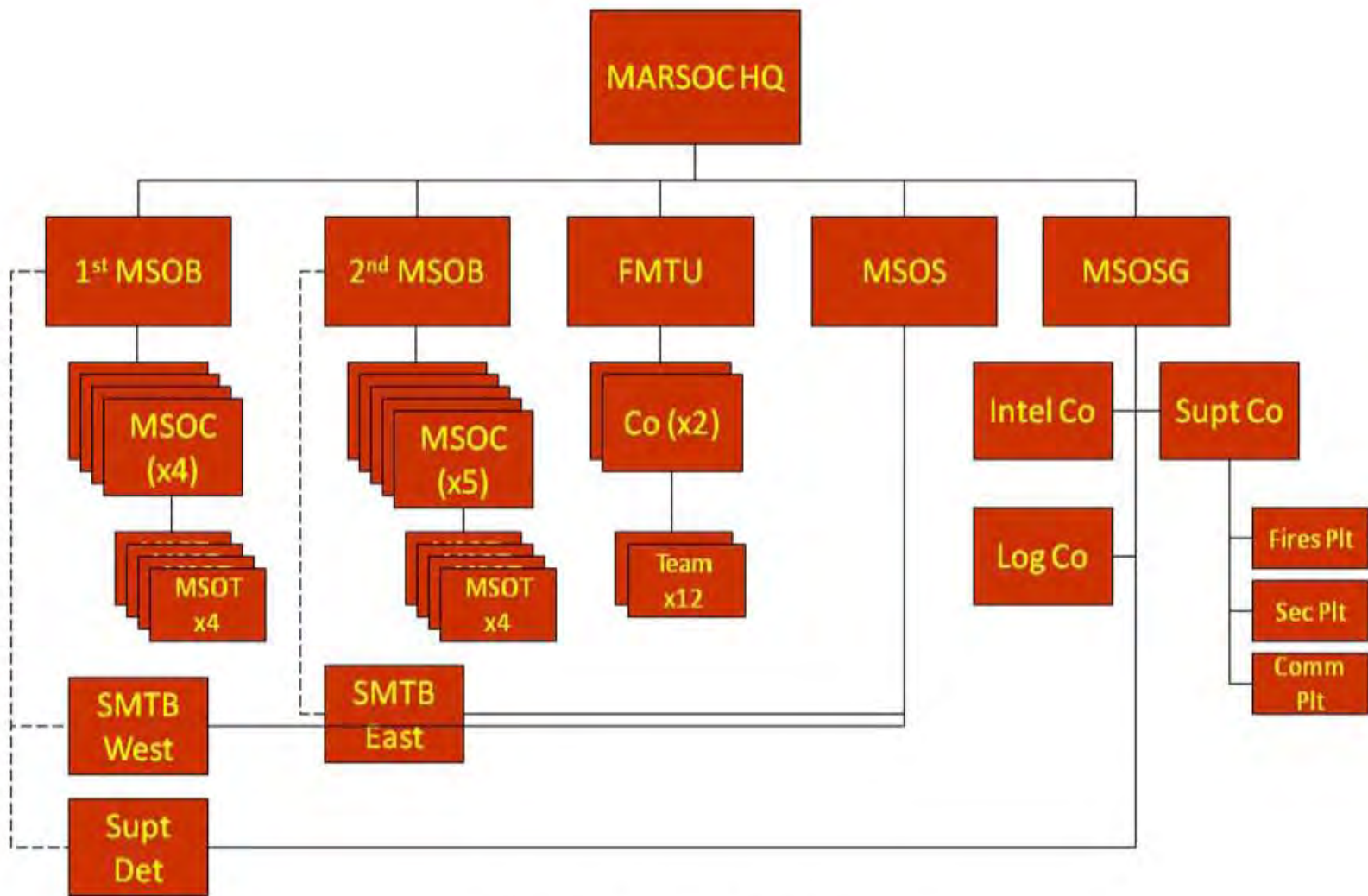


Figure 2: MARSOC at Creation

## Appendix A

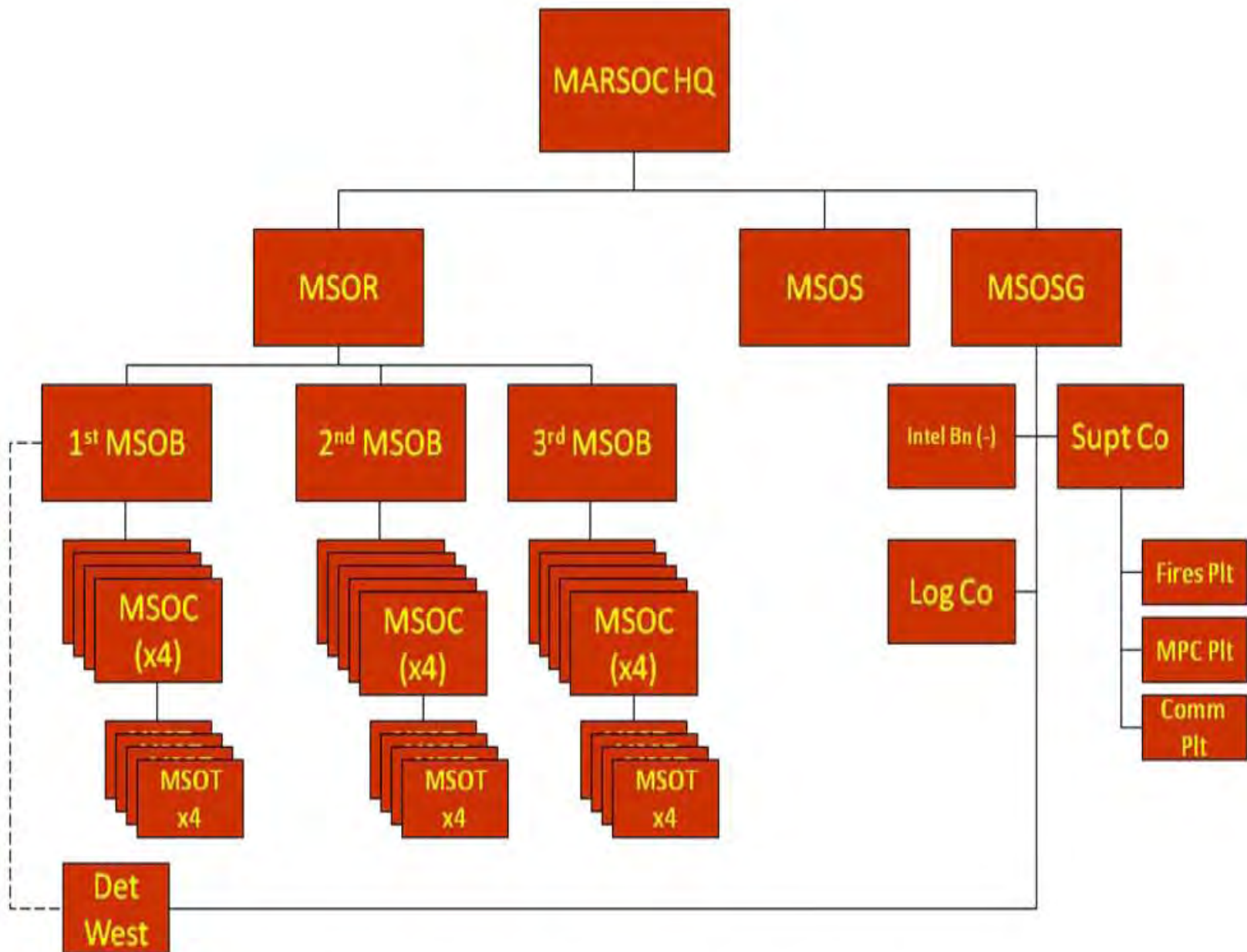


Figure 3: MARSOC Phase I (Endstate 2014)

## Appendix A

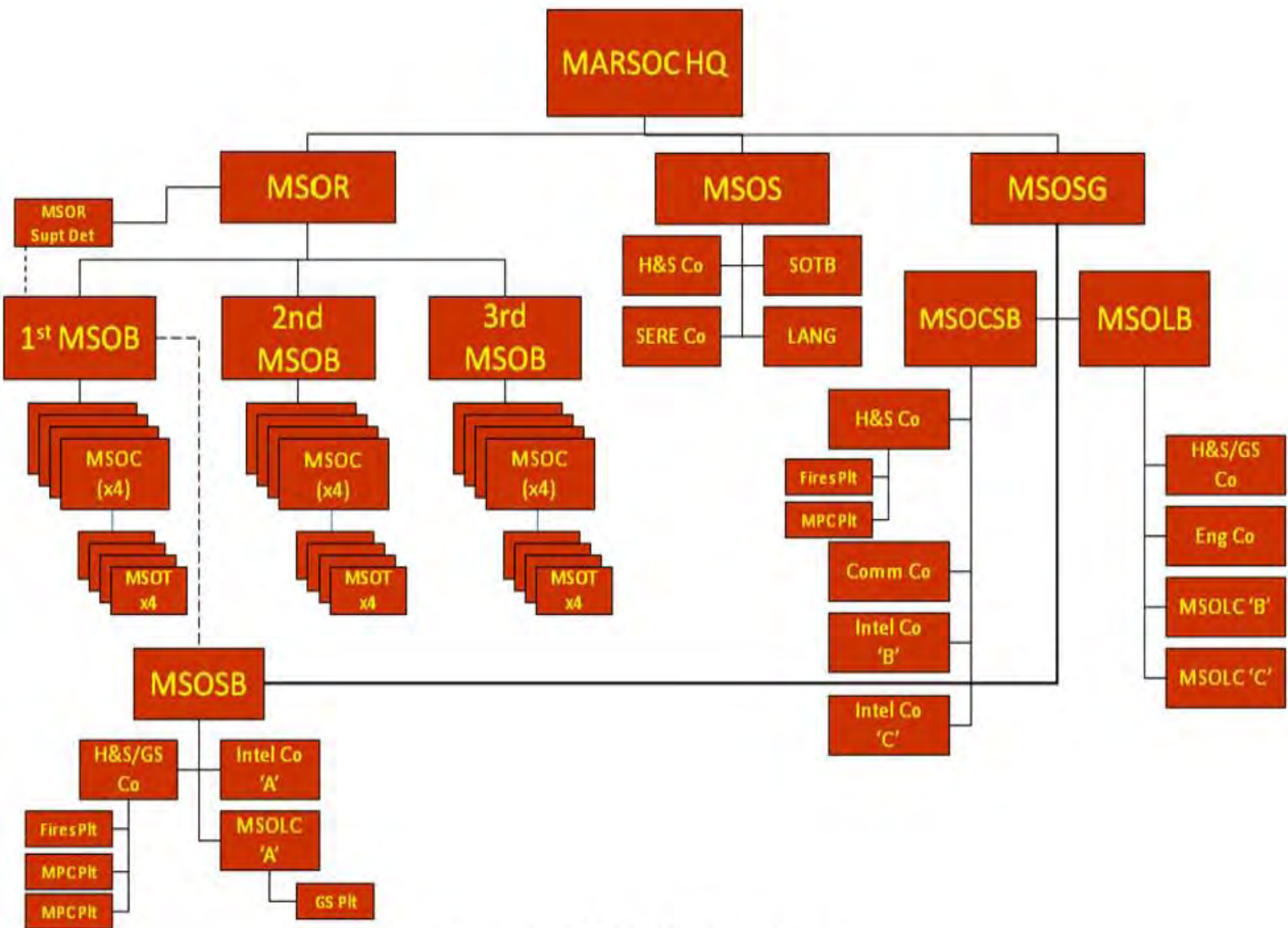


Figure 4: MARSOC Total Force

## Appendix A

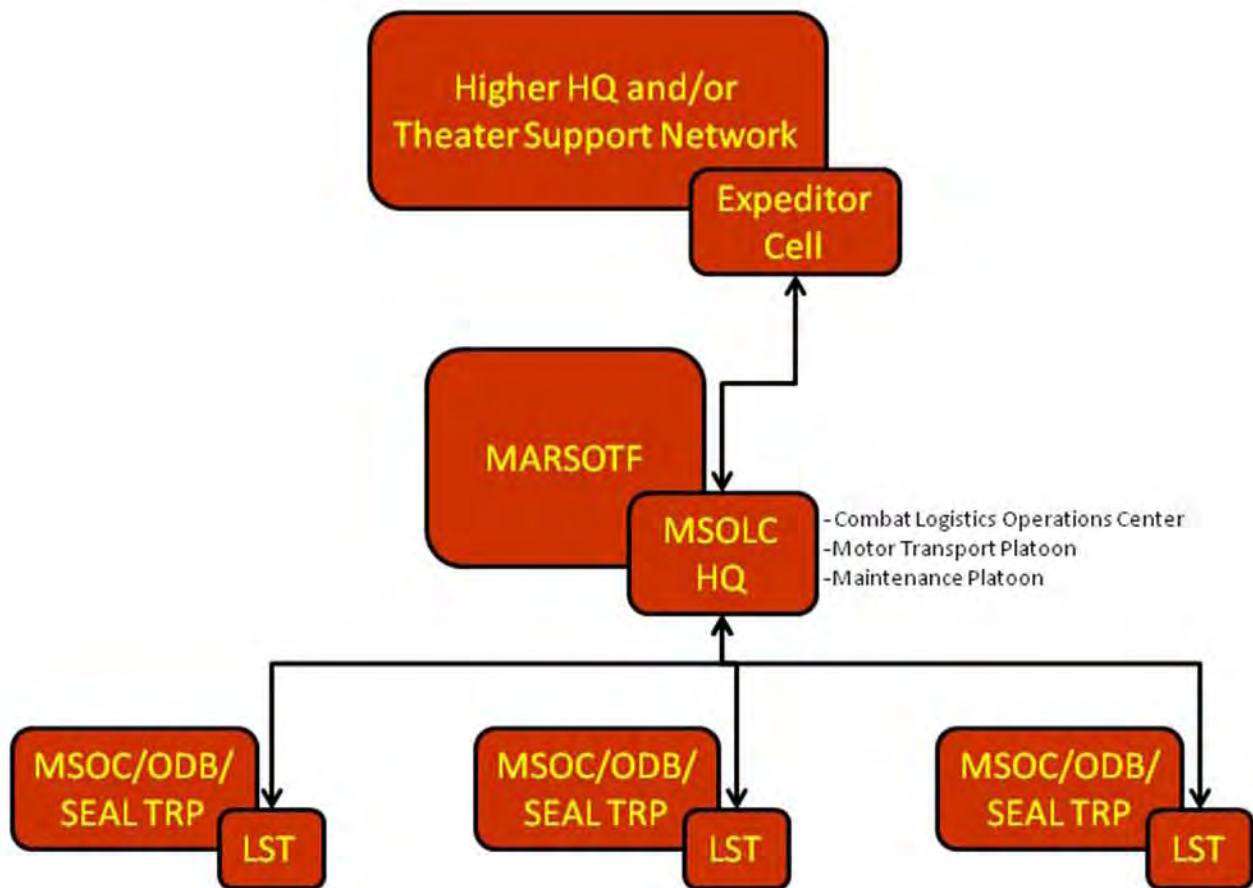


Figure 5: Proposed Deployed MSOLC Model

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